

LOCAL NEWS

# Chester youth organizations receive grants from trails coalition



PETE BANNAN – MEDIANEWS GROUP

Eyre Park trail in Chester, a half-mile segment near Chester High School along Chester Creek, was the latest to the Circuit Trails in Delaware County. (COURTESY PHOTO)



Chester Upland Youth Development United Soccer in Chester and 9th Street Youth & Community Center, Environmental Youth Corps Program are two of 10 Delaware Valley community organizations that have received grants for efforts to enhance neighborhoods along the Circuit Trails network.

The Pennsylvania Environmental Council and the Circuit Trails Coalition announced an investment of \$150,000 to support community-led programming along trails in the nine-county Circuit Trails network in Greater Philadelphia and southern New Jersey.

The first-ever Circuit Trails Coalition Community Grant Program invests in community organizations to support neighborhood priorities through engagement, activities and increased access to the region's trail network.

The 9th Street Youth & Community Center, Environmental Youth Corps Program will support tree plantings, tending and maintenance, summer habitat projects, basketball equipment, installing picnic tables and hosting mentoring/life skills workshops along the Chester Creek Trail in Chester's Eyre Park.

Chester Upland Youth Development United Soccer will hold Chester bike rodeos to engage city youth and families in bike riding lessons, bicycle safety and activities that encourage them to maximize health and wellness benefits while enjoying Chester's Delaware Riverfront Trail and the Eyre Park Levee Walk along Chester Creek.

Chester Upland Youth Development United will receive \$9,700 and the 9th Street YCC will receive \$10,000. Both organizations were awarded one year of funding.

"By funding locally led, community-driven projects across the Circuit Trails region, more residents will feel welcome, invited and connected to their neighborhood trail," said Emilia Crotty, administrator of the Community Grant Program and director of trails and equitable access at the council. "Grant-funded programs will encourage community members to recreate, rest and recharge in their public spaces, making sure they have access to the tremendous individual and community health benefits of trails."

Launched by the council with funding from the William Penn Foundation, the Circuit Trails Coalition grant program supports community-based, culturally relevant projects and programs on or near multi-use trails that are a part of the Circuit Trails network, which currently encompasses 375 miles of completed trail.

The grant program seeks to create a more welcoming and inclusive experience on the region's trails and to encourage trail use among the neighborhoods the trails serve. The program emerged from recommendations shared by under-resourced and under-served communities as part of the Circuit Trails 2020 Equity of Access to

Trails study

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“The Circuit Trails are an important asset for the region, and it is essential that neighboring communities feel that the trails are for them,” said Sarah Clark Stuart, chair of the coalition. “We want everyone to feel welcome and included in these spaces. These grantees are doing powerful work in their communities and are integrating the trail network into their programs in ways that meet the needs and priorities of their neighbors and the people they serve.”

Through projects, activities and activations including tree plantings, bike riding lessons, art installations and more, the program intends to improve access to and increase use of Circuit Trails, particularly in historically disinvested communities and among marginalized groups.

Recipients were awarded one-year or two-year grants of \$1,000 to \$10,000 per year for their projects. The awarded projects are set to launch this month.



## **Pete Bannan | reporter**

Pete Bannan has been a reporter/photographer in the Delaware Valley for DigitalMedia Group since 1995 covering general assignment news and sports on the Main Line as well as Chester and Delaware Counties. Bannan is a Delaware County native and a graduate of the Temple University with a degree in journalism.

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